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## ABSTRACT

Research-based answers are offered to the following questions on instructional time: (1) Can student achievement be improved by making time to teach? (2) What can a classroom teacher do to make time to teach? and (3) How can a school or district help the teacher? Factors related to instructional time which are described as having an effect on achievement include engaged time, direct instruction techniques, assignments which have a high probability of success, and orderly, warm classroom environments. In conjunction with these factors, seven activities which waste time are listed. Positive steps presented for teachers include adopting direct teaching techniques, increasing student responding, maintaining an orderly classroom with an academic focus, and selecting tasks that students need. Suggestions offered for schools or districts to help the teacher are scheduling uninterrupted time for learning, reviewing curriculum objectives, eliminating testing that is not used for instructional improvement, upgrading teachers' capabilities in direct instruction and instructional planning, and expressing support for academic achievement. The suggestions for schools and districts are accompanied by lists of resources. (DC)

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# MAKING TIME TO TEACH

## An Educational Problem/Strategy Booklet

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FLORIDA LINKAGE SYSTEM PROJECT  
Office of Educational Dissemination/Diffusion  
Florida Department of Education

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## INTRODUCTION

Every day educators encounter school problems they want to improve. Findings of research and results of development can sometimes help educators formulate a successful attack upon the problem. But before educators can use R&D outcomes, they must first become aware of them. This booklet is designed to provide educators with R&D outcome information that helps them plan strategies that solve problems.

The booklet begins with the reporting of a typical school problem in basic skills. Specific questions to be addressed by the subsequent paragraphs are then asked. Next, strategies, based upon research results which may be used to solve the problem are discussed. The description of each strategy is given so that educators can determine which approach will be most beneficial in improving their particular problem in their particular school situation.

After a school faculty considers strategies and determines which may be appropriate to pursue, they may wish to investigate the availability of validated\* educational products which incorporate the strategy. Appropriate educational products may be implemented in the school as a part of the solution to the problem. Therefore, descriptions of educational products that promote the successful strategies have been collected. You may obtain the descriptions of the products by checking and returning the send-back form found on the last page of this booklet, or by contacting:

FREE  
Public Schools Resource Center  
Florida Department of Education  
Knott Building  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
Phone: (904) 487-1078  
SUNCOM: 277-1078

\*Products are validated by undergoing extensive field-testing in classrooms and by comparing the improvements with pre-existing programs.

## MAKING TIME TO TEACH

### THE PROBLEM:

Our faculty has continuing discussions about why student achievement is so low. A number of us feel that we could improve student learning if only we were left alone to teach. Instead of teaching, our school day is spent recording bits of information (attendance, pupil performance, lunch money, donations, lesson plans, etc., etc.); testing to satisfy the district or state; ushering students in or out to go to some special class or activity; and coping with distractions (misbehavior, lack of materials, broken mimeographing equipment, etc.). The result is that we don't have enough time to teach our students so that they can keep learning in an orderly, progressive fashion.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Are we right to think that we can improve student achievement by making time to teach?
2. What can a classroom teacher do to make time to teach.
3. How can a school and a district help the teacher make time to teach?

### WHAT RESEARCH SAYS "MAKES A DIFFERENCE" IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Research doesn't have all the answers but it is providing some insights into factors and conditions that do make a difference in student achievement. In the past, research tended to focus on out-of-school factors, such as home life and intelligence. When teachers heard the results of the past research, they tended to feel helpless to change conditions over which they had no control. More recent research has focused on the classroom itself and what happens as a result of the child's time at school. The result of this type of research points to this general conclusion:

**"TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ACTIVITIES DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN  
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT!"**

Several factors which have repeatedly been shown to increase achievement in the basic skills area, and which may be controlled by the teacher along with support of school and district educators, are:

1. Amount of time the student spends engaged in learning;
2. Direct instruction techniques;
3. Tasks and assignments which have a high probability for success;
4. Orderly, warm classroom environments in which academic goals are given a priority.

All of these factors can be changed by teachers with the support of the administrative staff. Therefore, teachers need not feel helpless. Their efforts can improve their students' performance.

Time spent engaged in learning is the critical factor. The other three factors (direct teaching, highly-probable successful task, and orderly, warm classroom environment) are important because they enable students to spend more time on task.

Researchers found out about the crucial nature of time as they sat in typical classrooms around the nation and observed one student at a time and how he or she spent the day. Those students who chose to or were required to attend to the instruction in basic skills learned more than students who spent their time in other activities. The more minutes spent engaged in instruction, the greater the achievement.

In observing students in different classrooms, the researchers found a great deal of difference between students and between classrooms. Some students got to the assigned work and did it. Other students spent as little as 5 minutes in a school day engaged in any kind of learning activity. In some classrooms, teachers tended to ignore "off-task" behavior, while in others, teachers tended to manage student behaviors and to keep them on-task. In all cases, the time students actually spent engaged in academic learning was the critical factor. Scheduling a time for learning is not in itself sufficient. The student must use the time scheduled for activities which increase academic learning.

If time is such a critical factor in academic success, then teachers and their support staff need to examine what school features are taking time away from instruction.

## A LIST OF TIME EATERS

Before teachers can plan to increase the amount of time their students are able to spend engaged in academic instruction, they must first analyze their daily activities to see what activities and conditions are consuming time that could be better spent in learning. Each teacher can compile his or her own list of "time eaters," as well as examining general school activities to ferret out "time eaters."

Researchers, in observing classroom activities have noted a number of time eaters that need to be considered:

1. Transition time: The time spent transferring from one activity to another can consume minutes that could be spent for instruction. Transition activities include moving students from one place to another, moving teachers from one place to another, finding materials and tools for the instructional activities, finding the place in the book or work sheet, waiting for the teacher to explain, etc. Both the teacher and the whole school can analyze the time spent in transition so that more time can be spent on instruction.
2. Socializing: The time spent in personal conversation between student and student and between teacher and student consumes time that could be spent in academic learning (Brophy & Evertson, 1974; Soar & Soar, 1979). Studies of the productive use of classtime show that a focus on personal events by the teacher is negatively related to academic achievement (Brophy & Evertson, 1974; Soar & Soar, 1979).
3. Rowdy behavior and time spent in disciplining. Noisy behavior, student milling, and frequent out-of-seat activities (such as trips to the pencil sharpener, to get materials, to change places of activity, etc.) tend to distract students away from their instructional activities. The students at their seats trying to work tend to be distracted as well as those engaged in out-of-seat activities.

Another distractor observed in noisy classrooms was the teacher's frequent interruptions to maintain discipline. The time spent in producing rowdy behaviors, in attending to them, and in disciplining for them adds up to enough minutes to produce a

statistically significant difference between the achievement of an orderly class and one that requires frequent discipline (Soar & Soar, 1979; Rosenshine, 1979).

4. Lengthy explanations, unclear tasks. Sometimes teachers select instructional activities that require lengthy explanations. The time spent explaining how-to-do it subtracts from the time allotted for the learning activity. Teachers can increase time on-task by selecting types of instructional activities which are direct and clearly outlined.

At other times, the task a teacher assigns is not clearly explained. Students must repeatedly ask for further explanations about how-to-do it, and lose time that could better be spent in instruction (Rosenhine, 1979; Soar & Soar, 1977).

Classroom observers also note that teachers often fail to communicate the goal of the instruction to the students. Without understanding the goal, students could not direct their own resources to the task and tended to use less efficient learning strategies.

It has been found that learning is increased when the student knows the instructional goal. Students are able to use their learning strategies more efficiently when they are informed of the aim of their activities (Berliner & Rosenshine, 1977).

5. Inappropriate tasks. Students are sometimes assigned tasks which they can't hope to accomplish. They lack the prerequisite skills and so are unable to accomplish what is asked no matter how much they would like to do it. Not only is this practice a time-waster, it is detrimental to the student's belief in his worth. The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Studies point up the fact that students achieve more if they are given a majority of tasks which they can accomplish (Rosenhine, 1979; Schneider, 1979). Researchers suggest that in the early elementary grades, at least 70% of the tasks assigned should be the kind that the student has a good chance of completing successfully. In higher grades, it is thought that students can receive an increasingly greater percentage of difficult and challenging tasks.

A task can also be labeled inappropriate if it fails to ask the student to practice or do an activity which increases his or her ability to master the objective. Too often instructional time gets filled with busy work. For example, coloring block letters is an inappropriate exercise for learning the sound-letter association and, therefore a time waster when assigned to accomplish a reading objective. Inappropriate testing can also usurp classtime. Unless the teacher plans to use the information gained from testing to prescribe instruction or to make a change in the curriculum, then testing is not an instructional aid and wastes time.

6. Activities for which there is no academic goal. Too many times teachers select instruction because it sounds "fun" or "interesting" or "fills the time" rather than because it helps students reach a goal. To make effective use of class time, teachers should identify goals, understand the steps a student is required to take to reach the goals, and plan instruction accordingly. Using goals in this way increases achievement (Berliner & Rosenshine, 1977; Holzman & Boes, 1973).

Unfortunately, it is more often the case that school goals are merely words on paper and are not used to make educational decisions about whether an instructional activity should be included or eliminated.

7. Unsupervised activities. Researchers observing in regular classrooms noted that students who were engaged in independent seatwork or unsupervised learning center activities tended to be more easily distracted and therefore accomplished less in the same amount of time than students who activities were supervised by teachers. Students recognize the teacher as "a very important person" and work harder for the teacher than for almost any other person (tutor, aide, volunteer). When teachers assign the task, supervise on-task behavior, and provide students with feedback about their performance, achievement is increased (Renshine, 1979; Soar & Soar, 1979).
8. Inefficient classroom organization. Researchers observed that many classroom minutes were spent

"waiting." Students waited for the teacher to check their work so they could go on to the next task; they waited for materials to become available; they waited while other students finished work; they waited for class to begin or to be over. Waiting students are not learning students. They often create distractions which interrupt other students. Planning instruction which can be delivered efficiently will eliminate some of the time students spend just waiting.

9. Pre-emption of academic time by non-academic activities. While no school can use 100% of its day in academic learning, some schools and some teachers appear to encourage the pursuit of non-academic goals at the expense of basic skills learning. If principals consider academic learning important, they will be more reluctant to let non-academic activities pre-empt the time set aside for basic skills learning. Elementary school principals who state that reading achievement is a high priority were found to have schools that improved their reading achievement, even when all other factors remained the same (Brookover and Lezotte, 1977; State of New York, 1974). Teachers who stated that academic endeavors were important were also those whose students reached a higher level of achievement (Rosenshine, 1979; Soar & Soar, 1979).

#### WHAT CAN A CLASSROOM TEACHER DO TO MAKE TIME TO TEACH?

Besides analyzing the daily classroom activity for Time Eaters, a teacher can think about taking some positive steps toward increasing the time students spend engaged in learning.

Adopt direct teaching techniques for basic skills instruction.

Basic skills are typically those types of learning that can be spelled out in objective language. Moreover, most of the skills are meant to be well-learned (learned to automaticity) rather than being merely recognized or sort-of-known. That's because basic skills are meant to operate automatically and to free the human memory and attention processes so they may focus on acts that require reflection and creativity. We can comprehend what we read only when the process of reading becomes so automatic that we are able to use our "memory

space" to focus on meaning instead of on word calling. We can write stories or poems only when writing becomes so automatic we can use it to express what we want to say. Solving problems becomes easier when we can automatically express the situation using mathematical terms. Because of the requirement for mastery, basic skills learning takes a lot of practice time.

The nature of basic skills learning makes direct teaching a good instructional strategy. In direct teaching, the teacher:

1. Makes sure the student knows the goal of the instruction. (*"We're going to learn this new word!"*)
2. Guides the students in the recall of previously learned skills and knowledge which will ready them for the new learning. (*"Let's look at the letters in this new word and think of the sounds the letters tell us to make."*)
3. Demonstrates the new learning or poses a simple task so that students will gain the new information. (*"Can anyone say this new word?"*)
4. Poses a simple task that requires a student response. (*"Let's all say this new word."*)
5. Monitors the responses and informs the students about their performance. (*"I think I heard a /b/ sound. Does any letter in this word signal a /b/ sound?"*)

The lesson continues until the correct response is elicited. Planned activities give the students practice in making the response automatic.

To understand direct teaching more precisely, let's compare it with incidental teaching. In incidental instruction, the teacher assigns a task but does not tell students the goal of the instruction. For example, if the goal of instruction is "learning to capitalize appropriately," the teacher may assign the task of writing a story without telling the student that the goal is learning to capitalize. The students tackle the assignment. They try to write funny stories, exciting stories, etc. Several children ask about the spelling of words. One is a proper name and the teacher spells it emphasizing that the first letter is a capital. The teacher pauses to read Jimmy's story and comments out loud that she likes the way he has capitalized the beginning word in each sentence. The stories are turned in and graded on content and punctuation.

Such an emphasis is entitled "incidental instruction" because the learning occurred incidentally rather than in a planned fashion. Some students may have noted the comment about capitals, some may have learned that a specific new word requires a capital letter, but circumstances could have been such that nothing about capitalization was learned. Thus, incidental learning "happens" rather than being planned.

Not everything learned in school is directly taught. For example, most vocabulary (word meaning) is learned incidentally as students are reading or listening. But most basic skills can be taught directly, and are most efficiently learned when students focus upon the goal and practice what is to be learned. The sample objective "learning capitalization rules" can be directly taught in the following manner. The teacher tells the class the intention of the lesson. He spends time before assigning the task checking the prerequisites, for example, by asking his students if they can recall what a capital letter is and when one is used. The teacher has selected a trial paragraph and reprinted it with capitals deleted or added incorrectly. The class or group goes over the paragraph, finding words to capitalize and repeating the "rule" for capitalization of that word or letter. During this time, students are required to respond and the teacher prompts them until a correct response is given. As practice tasks, students are assigned several paragraphs similar to the first. The students know the goal for the instruction and attend to the letter details of the text rather than reading the text for interest or knowledge. These students are learning by direct instruction.

Direct instruction and direct teaching techniques are effective instructional strategy for most basic skills goals.

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| Increase the amount of student responding |
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Asking students to produce a response facilitates the learning of most basic skills. Since a majority of basic skills are to be learned to automaticity so that they may function without requiring much attention, they must be practiced to mastery. For this reason basic skills learning often requires a lot of repeated responding to learn, and the only time provided for that kind of practice is school class time.

It seems reasonable to hypothesize that if the number of times a student makes a response in a given classtime can be increased, then basic skills learning should be increased. Let us suppose, for example, that it requires a child an average

of 40 times to see and say a word before it is mastered. If, in one classroom, the student says the word twice in a 15 minute reading period then about a month of reading periods are required for mastery. But suppose that the teacher requires students to "see" and to "say" the word 10 times in a 15 minute period. It seems reasonable to propose that the word could be mastered in fewer days.

Technically, much more than number of response times enters the picture of student learning, but regardless of the fine technicalities, amount of practice is the best predictor of competent performance. To increase amount of practice is, in general, to increase achievement.

Several R&D programs\* have specifically dealt with increasing student responding by using some of the following techniques:

- (a) Choral responding rather than single student responding. In choral responding, the total class or small group produces the response together. We often think of choral responding as referring only to oral responses, but the responses can also be written in a chorus on paper, in a salt box, in the air, on a slate, etc.; they can be pointed to in a chorus or signed in some other way, such as holding up the correct card, clapping, holding the correct number of fingers as a sign to the correct answer, etc.

Choral responding has a major drawback that some students may not actually be responding to the stimulus intended by the teacher, but instead may be mimicking the responses of other students. By being aware of this possibility, the teacher can select such students for individual instruction. (A quick check can be carried out by asking for an individual response in the midst of a choral lesson.)

Sometimes lack of responding in a group is increased because of the typical, human tendency to attend to the responsive faces of the able

\*ECRI, Project INSTRUCT, SRA Distar, Precision Teaching, and Open Court are a few examples of some validated programs that increase the amount of student responding.

students and ignore the faces of less responsive students. To be successful with choral responding, the teacher must look directly at those students who appear less responsive. This simple trick can increase the attentiveness and participation of students who may otherwise lapse into a non-responsive mode.

- (b) Use rapid responding rather than the typical class tempo. In many classrooms, the teacher treats every exercise as though it required reflection. A lesson with a typical tempo may see the teacher call on a student and patiently wait for a response. Often, the student hasn't been listening, so the teacher must repeat the request. While getting one student back on track, many others have turned their attention to other things. And so the lesson drags on. *The pace of such a lesson is not given; it has been learned.* Students understand the lesson technique and know how to play the question-answer game. However, with a little training, the class can become adept at rapid responding. In rapid responding classrooms, students learn that the typical tempo is to be quickened. They also learn the cues teachers use to select the response (for example: when the teacher says "say" students say the word. Then the teacher says "spell" and students spell the word, etc.). The cues quickly become familiar as the students learn the routine for responding. Not only does rapid responding increase the number of times a response is given in a set amount of time, it also keeps the students' interest and attention focused upon the school task. There is no time for intrusive thoughts or day dreaming when responses must be produced in such rapid succession. Furthermore, requiring rapid responding promotes learning a response so that it is produced automatically. The basic skill can more easily become a routine procedure enabling attention to be turned to higher-order activities.

To increase the number of responses a student makes in a scheduled classtime, teachers may try the techniques called choral responding and rapid responding. These techniques are appropriate for basic skills when the response is to be learned to mastery or automaticity by practice.

Maintain an orderly classroom with an academic focus.

Classroom observers noted that teachers whose students made greater academic gains spent more time interacting with their students on academic matters and less time explaining procedure, less time in seatwork, less time in discipline, and less time in transition periods. This finding supports the studies in which observers followed students and their activities, but these studies specifically focused upon teacher behavior and noted the behaviors of effective teachers.

One difference these researchers observed in behavior between effective teachers and less-able teachers was the way in which the first weeks of school were spent. Effective teachers spent the beginning weeks of the school year concentrating upon the expected rules of behavior, and classroom procedures for accomplishing tasks. Rather than starting the year experimenting with elaborate grouping techniques, or plunging into sophisticated learning, effective teachers spent the first weeks reviewing lessons and taking time to explain to students the procedures for heading assignments, turning them in, grading, getting materials, lining up, finding desks, etc. Only when the routine became familiar and the class operating efficiently did these teachers try out new lessons and new procedures.

The researchers also observed that effective teachers did not use punishment nor threats to effect order in the classroom. On the other hand, they did not let a breach of the rules escape notice. They consistently pointed out to misbehaving students the type of behavior that was expected. The words effective teachers spoke did not belittle the student, but did inform them that the behavior exhibited was not meeting the standards (Clark, 1979; Soar & Soar, 1979).

Classrooms in which children achieved more were notably quieter and more orderly than classes in which students learned less. Students were able to stay on-task because they were not as frequently interrupted in their instructional activities. In the past, classrooms in which order was maintained were often labeled as authoritarian as opposed to democratic. However, Soar and Soar (1979) found that quiet, orderly classrooms could not be equated with authoritarian teachers. Many teachers who maintained orderly classrooms also demonstrated democratic approaches when interacting with students. Thus, orderly, democratic classrooms are possible and this combination supports achievement, and surprisingly, also supports creativity and problem solving (Soar & Soar, 1979).

Researchers have also found that praise alone does not increase achievement. To be effective, praise must be combined with an academic focus and other effective teaching techniques. However, studies show that negative affect such as belittling students can have a detrimental effect upon achievement (Rosenshine, 1979; Soar & Soar, 1979).

The findings of these recent observational studies present a different picture than when, in an earlier era, it became vogue to portray noisy, active classrooms as the better environment for learning, and teacher-directed orderly classrooms as stifling learning and creativity. This earlier view has not stood the test of observation, and the role of the teacher and the expected behavior of students must now be rethought in light of the present findings.

The teacher can make changes in classroom management that facilitate students' learning. They can reduce the distractions in the classrooms, and support the importance of school learning. These changes can be accomplished without stooping to authoritarianism or using negative affect. Classrooms can be warm, democratic places and also have an academic focus.

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| Select tasks that students need. |
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Basic skills learning can be described as climbing a stairway. A student has to take the first step to get to the second. If a student slips on one step, she'll have trouble catching her balance on the next.

It helps for a teacher to know at which step each student is located. In that way, the lessons and tasks can provide practice for the step and initiate practice to reach the next step.

This requirement on teachers sounds terribly demanding, and it can be if it is misunderstood. The first thing a teacher needs to understand about the stairway approach to learning is that science has not at this time identified each small step. At most, the landings are fairly clear. For example, a student ought to be proficient in addition before being asked to multiply numbers, or ought to be able to distinguish the difference in letters before being asked to recognize words. So a teacher should add a large dose of common sense to text book sequences and other continua.

Presently, many publishing companies and many committees that develop scope and sequences for curricula seem to feel that the more objectives they can list, the better. Perhaps

they feel more teachers will accept the continuum if they see their favorite approach or objectives among the hundreds. While this scope and sequence may satisfy teachers as they examine the program, it results in a program that is too unwieldy to implement. The teacher is harried in trying to pretest, teach, and test every objective for every child. To eliminate excessive and trivial objectives, a teacher can think about the most important steps for reaching the landing and concentrate on those.

A second thing a teacher ought to understand about the stairway approach to learning is that the student's performance tells you about where he's located on the stairway. A teacher needs to keep observing how the student is performing to understand what is needed as instruction. When a teacher wants to find out specifically where on the stairway a student is located, the teacher can use a test to find out. Testing typically confirms the teacher's observation, but sometimes it gives new information about where a student is located.

A third thing that can be remembered about the stairway approach is that a test may not be assessing automaticity. Many times a teacher and students want to bound to the top, not realizing that accomplishing the objective just once may not accomplish mastery. Then in the next grade, the teacher wonders "what in the world" the pupils learned in the previous grades. Taking time to master objectives and observing students as they use their learning in a new situation or an application situation may be better learning than rushing through a whole sequence of objectives. Some mastery learning programs use the approach that each day's lesson starts where the slowest child is located on the stairway. All the lessons from this point in the sequence are reviewed by the group. (Reviewed in this case means a question-responding session so that students practice the responses at each step.) Finally, a new lesson is added. Thus, each day one small step is introduced, but the new step is supported by practice of the previous sequence.

The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Studies have demonstrated the importance of providing tasks that children have a good chance of succeeding at. Learning was greater when students could accomplish the assigned lesson rather than being given lessons which are too difficult to complete. It has been suggested that 70% of the tasks assigned to early elementary students should be those which can be completed with a high probability for success (Schneider, 1979). This finding also suggests that repetition of skills and an unhurried, methodical approach to skills learning creates greater mastery than a dash to reach the top.

Teachers can make time to teach by focusing upon critical objectives, by selecting tasks that meet the student's needs, and by providing time for practice for the skill.

HOW CAN A SCHOOL AND DISTRICT HELP THE TEACHER MAKE TIME TO TEACH?

Schedule an uninterrupted time for basic skills learning.

1. Schedule times for announcements, lunch counts, assemblies, etc. so they don't interrupt the time allotted for teaching basic skills. Assign a block of time for basic skills learning so that the sequence of instructional steps needed for direct teaching can be accomplished without interruption.
2. Examine the movement of students, teachers, and materials to see if there are some more efficient way for these to occur so transition times and waiting times are at a minimum.

For a review of different methods of scheduling classes and assigning teachers you may request one copy of the following booklet:

- MODELS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY:  
ALTERNATIVES FOR ACHIEVEMENT

from: FREE  
Florida Department of Education  
Knott Building  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
Phone: (904) 487-1078  
SUNCOM: 277-1078

A send-back form on the last page of this booklet may be used to request the booklet.

Review the list of objectives (the school's continuum or curriculum guide) to see if the objectives are critical to acquiring the skill and if they are appropriately sequenced.

Recent research and developments concerning skills critical to reading, writing, and problem solving can be used to eliminate unneeded objectives. Moreover, much has been learned about implementing a mastery approach in ordinary classrooms. The district and school can help the teacher by examining its expectations in light of present knowledge. Some information that can help a district or school accomplish the review is:

- RESEARCH WITHIN REACH: A RESEARCH GUIDED RESPONSE TO CONCERNS OF READING EDUCATORS

Produced by the National Institute of Education (NIE), a free copy of RESEARCH WITHIN REACH can be obtained by sending a request to:

FREE  
Florida Department of Education  
Knott Building  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
Phone: (904) 487-1078  
SUNCOM: 277-1078

or by checking the send-back sheet on the last page of this booklet, and returning it and your address to FREE.

A comparable interpretation of research in mathematics may be obtained by requesting the series:

- RDIS INTERPRETIVE REPORT IN MATHEMATICS

NIE is presently sponsoring the development of a similar interpretation of research on writing (composition) and by 1981 you may request information about it from FREE.

- DIAGNOSTIC TESTING REQUIREMENTS FOR READING IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES

This booklet about objectives for early reading by R.M. Gagné specifies critical objectives and suggests observations (tests) that determine the mastery of the objective. A copy may be obtained by contacting FREE.

● MASTERY LEARNING: THEORY, RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION

Doris Ryan and Martha Schmidt report case studies of mastery learning. These experiences of real schools involved in implementing mastery learning provide insight into critical features of basic skills learning and strategies for corrective instruction. A loan copy of the booklet is available through FREE. The borrower is responsible for the cost of the return of the copy to FREE.

If the school or district would like to consider educational products that provide a list of basic skills objectives and performance tests for the skills, the school or district can learn about these programs by requesting the following booklets:

- READING INSTRUCTION BASED ON IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE NEEDS
- LANGUAGE ARTS INSTRUCTION BASED ON IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE NEEDS
- MATH INSTRUCTION BASED ON IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE NEEDS

Check the send-back request form and return to FREE to receive a copy.

Eliminate testing where the information is not used to improve instruction.

A more positive way to say it is: Provide teachers with an interpretation of the test results that can be used to improve instruction. The district, as well as the school may want to review the tests presently prescribed, and weed out those which are not used as a demonstration of strengths and weaknesses of the school's program. The State Student Assessment Test is an example of a test that can be used to pinpoint deficiencies that can be improved by direct instruction. The information it provides about student performance can identify areas of instruction which the school can improve.

Upgrade teachers' capabilities in direct teaching techniques and in planning instruction that meets students' needs.

While teachers may currently use many direct teaching techniques, they may not include all of the steps that are designated as part of the technique, or they may need to refine their techniques. A district or school can support teachers' efforts to improve their teaching ability. To examine validated programs that use direct teaching strategies and which have teacher training, you may send for one free copy of:

- BASIC SKILLS PROGRAMS FEATURING DIRECT TEACHING

from: FREE  
Florida Department of Education  
Knott Building  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
Phone: (904) 487-1078  
SUNCOM: 277-1078

A send-back form for your convenience is included as the last page of this booklet.

Information which relates to planning instruction that meets students' performance needs may be obtained from the previously mentioned booklets:

- READING INSTRUCTION BASED ON IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE NEEDS
- LANGUAGE ARTS INSTRUCTION BASED ON IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE NEEDS
- MATH INSTRUCTION BASED ON IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE NEEDS

Sometimes our efforts to change teaching techniques are helped by sharing our experiences with other teachers. A teacher in California as an individual effort, tried to increase time spent on task. After two school years of effort, she took the time to write her experiences, sharing her successes, failures, joys and frustrations. Her account may be obtained by requesting from FREE:

- A TEACHER IMPLEMENTS BTES  
by Raquel Muir, Will Rogers Elementary,  
Santa Monica Unified School District

## Express support for academic achievement

Because of the many demands that have been placed upon schools and the focus upon non-academic activities, teachers and students can believe that their efforts in basic skills learning are not worth while! A principal can support academic achievement by hearing a student read a book, by examining a student's math paper, by sponsoring a "20 books a year" club, and by consistent expression of the importance of basic skills mastery.

A principal who attempted to increase academic learning time discusses her experiences in the following article that may be obtained from FREE:

- A PRINCIPAL IMPLEMENTS BTES  
by Pamela Noli, Principal at Howard Elementary School  
Madera Unified School District.

Teachers in today's schools must meet expectations. They must often make time to teach. The school and the district staff can provide support so teachers will have time to teach and improve student achievement.

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## MAKING TIME TO TEACH

To receive more information, check the name of the selected product(s) on this sheet. Detach, fold so that the address shows, and mail.

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